

***Save the Flock: A Design Campaign Focused on Addressing Issues in the
Exotic Bird Trade***

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Abstract

The exotic parrot trade industry is notably rampant with abuse and neglect of exceptionally intelligent animals. In order to work to fix this problem, I created a website, app, printed media, and a quiz to better spread information on parrot care and hopefully encourage people to either not get a parrot at all, or at the very least adopt rather than purchase one from a chain pet store. Through these different collaterals I addressed my target audience by displaying the print media in pet stores, veterinary clinics, and animal shelters. This print media then leads the viewer to the online resources available to them.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Shantanu Suman for his help in advising me through this project. His support and willingness to assist me whenever needed was instrumental in my completion of this project.

I would also like to thank Matthew McDonough for his continuing support and help throughout this campaign, and for providing his coding expertise where I struggled.

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Process Analysis Statement

I chose the topic for this project because it is something I am very passionate about. I love animals and the blatant abuse and neglect in the pet trade industry infuriates me. I am also very passionate and informed on the care requirements of parrots because one year ago I purchased my own parrot, and I know if I hadn't prepared myself to the extent that I did beforehand I would have had some serious issues and potentially have had to rehome him. While learning more about parrots and their care I began to fully understand just how much abuse and neglect they see on a regular basis in the exotic parrot trade industry and even once they have found homes. Anybody can easily go into a large chain pet store and purchase a budgie for \$15. These budgies are parrots and have the intelligence similar to that of a young toddler, yet they can be purchased at a small price, get trapped in a tiny cage that they can hardly even fit in, and be ignored by the owner. These small yet incredibly intelligent creatures are seen as disposable almost to the same level as fish, often purchased as a gift for a young child who has no idea how much care these birds need. Smaller parrots like budgies are often over-bred in terrible conditions, many times suffering terrible illnesses and diseases from inbreeding to get brighter color mutations. Larger more expensive exotic parrots are often stolen from nests in the wild and sold in pet stores, ultimately affecting the biodiversity of wild parrots and furthering the risk to endangered species like hyacinth macaws. My main goal for this campaign was to spread information on parrot care and prevent impulse purchases of parrots, along with pushing the idea of "adopt don't shop."

At the beginning of my process I found myself having to do extensive amounts of research. Even though I was already quite informed on parrot care, the more I learned the

more I realized I did not know. Much of the research I did for the quiz interface was species-specific, however the information on parrots is limited in this sense. Parrots living in captivity often have a wildly different lifespan than those living in the wild because they have less risk of disease and don't have to worry about predators, assuming the caregiver is actually informed on proper parrot care. Along with this, some parrots have not been kept in captivity long enough to know their actual lifespan. Pionus parrots, for example, have been known to live anywhere from 20-45 years, which is an incredibly wide and non-specific range. Many parrot life spans are also increasing as the scientific community does more research and learns more about their intricate needs. For my research, I also had to identify my target audience and learn more about this audience. This proved to be very challenging because my audience was so broad and difficult to simplify. My target audience is mainly focused on people who would impulse buy a parrot, but anybody with at least \$15 can go into a pet store and buy a bird. My best chance of targeting this specific group of people was by advertising my campaign and information thoroughly in all the places impulse buyers of birds may go.

In my research, I also include my learning of JavaScript. Before this campaign I was familiar with HTML and CSS, but JavaScript was a new challenge that I had not yet attempted to face. I taught myself JavaScript by watching a large amount of tutorial videos as well as taking the free courses provided on code academy. Learning This language to the level needed to complete my quiz interface took several months of studying and note-taking, and even still I am sure I could improve upon my code given more time and experience in this coding language. In preparing to create the quiz, I found as many similar types of quizzes that I could to see how other people organized their code and data sets.

My next step in the process after research was planning. After learning all I could in as short of a time as possible, I needed to solidify my ideas for where I wanted to take this campaign. In the beginning before my research I had very broad ideas and wanted to include a little bit of everything. However, after learning all that I did I realized that focusing on everything in the time that I had would not give me as in-depth of an approach as I wanted for certain topics. For this reason, I focused less on parrots in the wild and how their biodiversity is affected by the exotic parrot trade, and instead tried to focus on an area I was more likely to be able to actually effect. I wanted to help parrots in the home by educating people who own parrots, and hopefully convince more people to adopt parrots rather than purchase them from chain pet stores. To properly spread my information to a wide audience I needed to make it accessible online. The bulk of my project is housed online as a website, app, and quiz interface. However, I needed some way of getting my audience to reach these online sources. For this reason, I created a variety of printed media that would then be displayed in pet stores, veterinary offices, and animal shelters. This includes a basic care requirements poster and a series of postcard takeaways that have species-specific information and links to my online sources on the back.

As for my electronic media, the app is more focused on people who already have parrots as pets. It provides opportunities to track health information and caters to both new parrot owners and experienced owners alike. The website is much more focused on new parrot owners, or people considering impulse buying a parrot but haven't yet. The website is full of detailed information that the poster only brushed over, and it also has an easy way to find parrots available for adoption near you, once again pushing adoption over purchasing from pet

stores. The website also hosts my quiz, which was created with the intent to better match up the correct species of parrot with the potential owner's living situation. Many of the questions in the quiz are failure questions, meaning that if the user answers two or more questions with the failure option they are told they should not get a bird because it would not fit with their lifestyle. In this way, even though the quiz is helping people choose a species of parrot as a pet, it ensures that the prospective owner is actually capable enough to care for a parrot. By learning all the information and taking the quiz, I hopefully would change some people's minds on the idea of getting a parrot once they realize just how much work it would be. Once I planned everything that I wanted to accomplish, I got to work building the aesthetic of my organization, which I decided to name Save the Flock.

I chose the name Save the Flock after going through a wide variety of options and eliminating my least favorite until I only had one left. It is short, to the point, and gives you a sense of purpose. When you hear "Save the Flock" you want to know why it needs saving in the first place? This stirs you to learn more about the issues in the industry. Flocks are also great examples of working together. Parrots are social animals and are very accustomed to working together in large groups to help promote the furthering of the species. If my audience also works together to learn more and do their part, then maybe I can actually make some substantial change in the industry.

After coming up with a name, I create an identity system for my organization. This way, all my work could be cohesive and recognizable. For the color scheme, I originally began with a variety of darker saturated colors, but it felt too depressing. The topic of neglect that I am addressing is maybe not the most light-hearted of subject matter, but I did not want it to look

too negative and potentially put my audience off to the important information. Because of this, I ultimately lightened my palette to more pastel shades. For the logo, I decided on the imagery of a green wing macaw. I chose this species because I believe this is the parrot that most people think of when they hear the word parrot. I wanted to use a more well-known parrot even though my printed media will mostly be displayed near budgies and small conures at chain pet stores because most people don't realize that budgies are parrots too and have all the same general care requirements as a large parrot. Many people think smaller birds are easier to care for or are "starter" parrots rather than seeing them as equally complex intelligent creatures. For the font, I struggled to decide on a proper style for quite a while. At first, I was very stuck on using a simple condensed sans-serif font to match the geometric style of my logo, but it did not work well and ended up looking fairly bland. Ultimately, I chose a more ornate signature-like font style that, while more cursive, complemented the geometric design rather than mimicking it. I ended up choosing the font Lobster Regular because it is available on Google Fonts for free and is very easy to access for my website design. For the body font, I chose Avenir because of its readability.

After creating the identity system, I decided to create my app first. As mentioned earlier, the target audience for the app is mostly people who already have parrots, but it is useful for both new and experienced parrot owners. Firstly, I created a login page. After logging in, the user can create a profile for each bird. I wanted my app to have the capability to handle multiple birds because parrots are flock animals and so most parrot owners own two birds to keep each other company. The reminder system set-up is next. With this the user can mark what they would like to be reminded to do. This includes yearly vet checkups, weekly cage

cleanings, reminders to administer medicine daily, reminders to swap out toys weekly to keep the parrot properly enriched and interesting, and many more. The user also has the option to create their own personal reminders depending on what they want to get out of the app. After the reminders are set up, the user is then directed to a home screen where they have four possible options: Health, Diet, Fun, and Training.

In the Health tab the user can track their bird's weight, send data to the vet, track symptoms and potential health issues, and learn more about the potential dangers that are found in the home. The Diet tab has a chop builder to help the user provide a more balanced diet of fresh fruits and vegetables for their bird, along with a tab on vitamins and minerals and a tab that gives the user creative ideas for treats to keep the parrot's life more interesting. Just like humans, birds do not want to eat the exact same meal every single day. Giving them variety will help with enrichment and keep your bird healthier. In the Fun tab the user can find ideas for encouraging foraging, a natural and integral activity in any parrot's life. The Fun tab also provides a place for companies to advertise their toys straight to their target audience. In order for these companies to advertise on my app they would pay a small fee that would cover the costs of the app, allowing it to be free to reach a larger audience. The Training tab is the last available option on the app. It has a clicker, training tips, and new trick ideas. In the wild parrots are constantly learning, exploring, and problem solving. However, in captivity many parrots result to plucking and self-mutilation out of boredom if their social needs are not met or if they do not have proper mental stimulation. By training your bird to do new tricks you are engaging a part of your bird's brain that needs to stay active. Regular training keeps parrots happy and healthy.

After creating the app, I decided to move on to the website. On the homepage, I advertised my app and have a link for the user to take the quiz. The Parrot Care tab is very information heavy and took the most time to create. My main goal for this campaign was to spread proper care information that was unbiased, explained both sides of the more controversial issues such as wing clipping, and provided links to reliable sources. Many informational sources out there that discuss parrots are very outdated. For example, many websites and training books will talk about height dominance. These training tips say that you should never allow your parrot to be higher up than you because they see height as a power play and allowing them to be above you means they are more dominant over you and won't listen to you. This information is completely false and has been proven wrong countless times. Parrots only go up to higher areas and want to be above you because they naturally feel safer when they are higher up. It is an important instinct and has absolutely nothing to do with dominance. I wanted to make sure that my readers had access to reliable information.

For my website, I also created a page that gives the user easy access to birds near them that are available for adoption. Many times, people purchase birds from breeders or pet stores simply because they are not aware that there are countless birds out there being rehomed or needing to be adopted. Many people will purchase a parrot without realizing just how long they can live for. Your average small conure can live up to 30 years, twice the lifespan of most breeds of dogs. After a few years with the parrot, many realize they were not prepared for such a long commitment and put it up for adoption because they "don't have the time for it anymore."

Adopting a parrot is also generally a better decision because of the issues with puberty. Once a parrot hits puberty at around 2-6 years of age (it varies depending on species) its personality

will change dramatically in ways you may not expect. When you adopt a bird that is already a few years old, the bird's personality is established and is not likely to change. However, if you purchase a baby bird from a breeder you have no idea how that bird will turn out. For these reasons, I wanted to make the adoption process as simple as possible. I tried encouraging adoption as much as possible throughout the campaign, but the adoption page on the website is the strongest method of achieving that.

After the website was completed I moved on to the print collaterals. The care poster was inspired by a large glass counter that the local exotic parrot store in Indianapolis has. This counter is the place where they allow you to handle/play with new baby birds that the store purchases from local breeders. This counter is also the location where most people in the store make their impulse decisions to buy a parrot. How could you say no to buying a parrot after spending an hour playing with an adorable cuddly baby bird? I wanted to remedy this impulse location by making a poster that clearly outlines just how much work and difficulty is involved in owning and raising a parrot. I also created species specific postcards as takeaways since the poster was too big to be given away to every visitor. The postcards provide more information on whatever species they feel fits best in their home, and the back side of the cards has links and information to guide the user to my website and app.

After everything else was created, I finally began to work on the last and most difficult aspect of my campaign: the quiz interface. I am a designer and artist by nature, and while coding is not exceptionally difficult for me, I have never written a full program from start to finish. I had a lot of help from a variety of people experienced in coding, along with my semester's worth of instructional videos and code academy lessons. To create the quiz, I began

by looking at other similar quizzes. There are a variety of “Which parrot is right for you?” quizzes online, but I found many of them to be lacking in necessary information. Many of these quizzes also don’t have the option to fail them. I found quite a few quizzes where I answered as bad as I possibly could, making myself seem absolutely unprepared for parrot ownership, and I usually just got recommended a budgie. This was not a good way of approaching the situation, so I decided to create a failure system in my quiz. Specifically, though, I looked at how these quizzes had structured their code. The majority created a value system in terms of difficulty level in the care of certain parrot species. Once the user answered all the questions the quiz determined how much difficulty they were prepared to handle, and suggested a bird that was set at that level. Others assigned each species a different numerical value and then correlated these numerical values to specific answers for each question. The quizzes then tallied up how many points each species received and displayed those with the highest values. For many of these quizzes, however, they only showed one species even if the user scored the same level for multiple different species. I wanted to create my quiz to show every possible bird they matched with and explanation text as to why this bird would fit with their lifestyle.

I decided to create my quiz similar to the numerical value system. To do this I first made a list of parrots I wanted to include in the quiz. This was a difficult process because there are many different species of parrots and many different subspecies in each species. For example, in the *pyrrhura* genus you can find green cheeked conures, crimson bellied conures, rose headed conures, and many more. These conures all have fairly similar life spans, personality traits, and noise levels, but they still have their differences. Some genera have wider variety than others, and it was difficult to determine whether I would just include the genera or all the

individual names of each species. I ended up creating a list of 20 different parrot species just for the sake of having to code each species and value into the quiz, but I definitely could have included a lot more if I had the time.

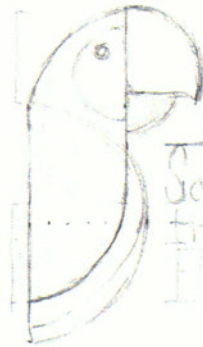
At first, I didn't have any way to handle if the birds tied on scoring after the user completes the quiz. This was very likely to happen since many of the larger parrots have similar lifespans and care requirements. Because of this I went back in and added a function that returned all birds that scored the same score as the winning bird. This way my quiz would include every parrot the user matched with. I then had to use HTML to display a text explanation under the selected parrots. Before this point the quiz could only display the name of the parrots selected, but it couldn't even display spaces in the names. When the quiz finds all the chosen birds it adds them to an array and then a separate function scans through the array and prints the html explanations for each bird at the bottom of the page.

Ultimately, this campaign was far more wide-reaching and time consuming than I ever expected it to be. If I had more time to work on it I would have added more information about wild parrots and how they are affected by the exotic parrot trade, but I only had so much time to create all that I needed to do. As I went on in this project my plans grew and changed and I ended up studying more into a different area than I expected to. I feel I have learned a lot from this thesis project and if possible I intend to go back and create more for it in the future.

Early Process Work



- green wing Macaws
- the parrot eye/body
- red, green, blue, black colors



Save
the
Flock

tall
condensed
font

looking right-forward pigeon



scruffed

- tail feathers?
- "Save the Flock"
- Bird Steward
- Nest Rescue
- Flight writer - not taken
- on the wing - not taken



Identity System

Logomark



Typography

Logo - Lobster Regular

Header - DIN Alternate Bold

Subheader - Avenir Black

Body - Avenir Medium

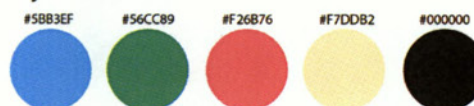
Other - Avenir Light Oblique

Lockups



Save the Flock 

Primary Colors



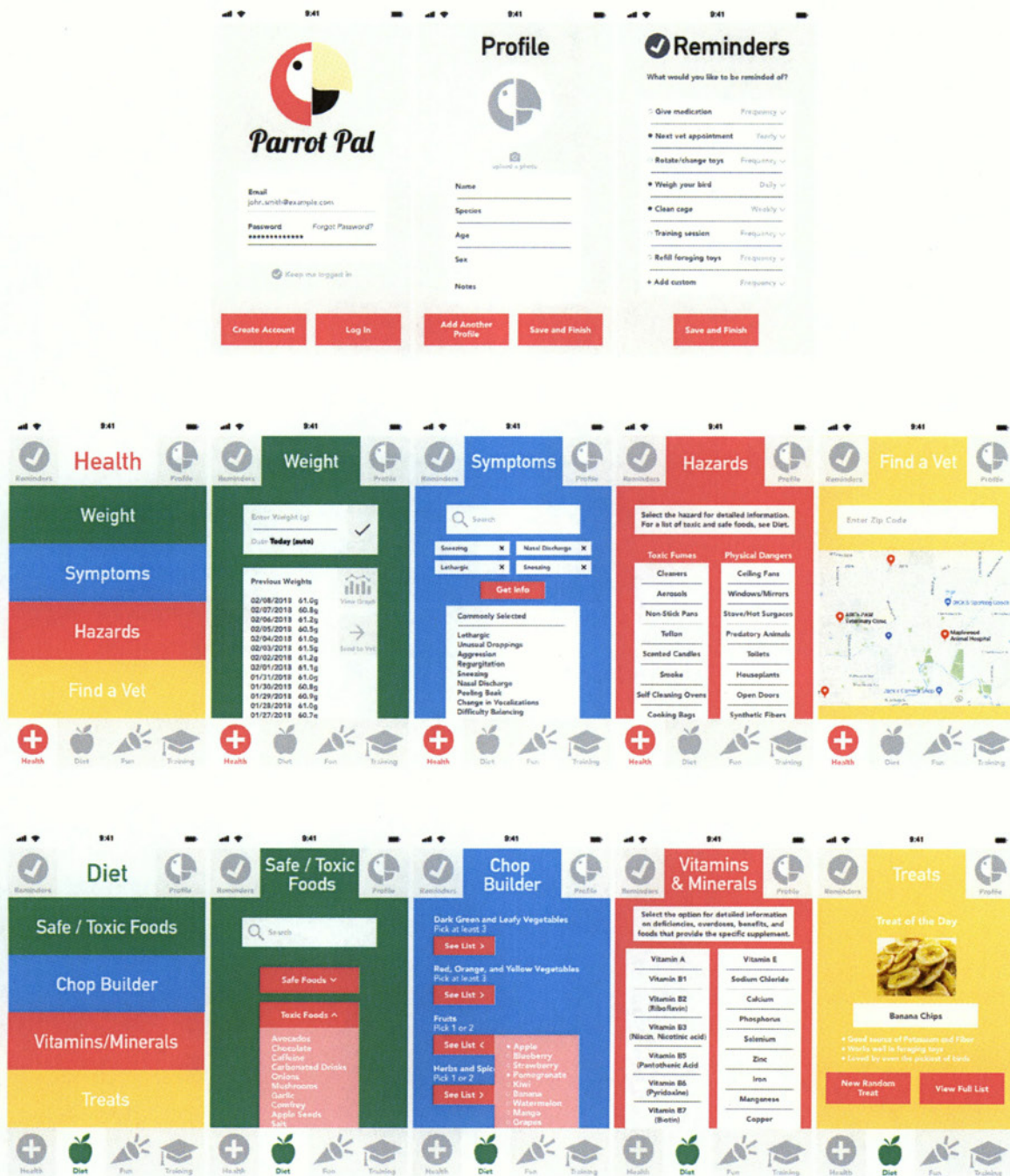
Secondaries and Neutrals



Patterns and Icons



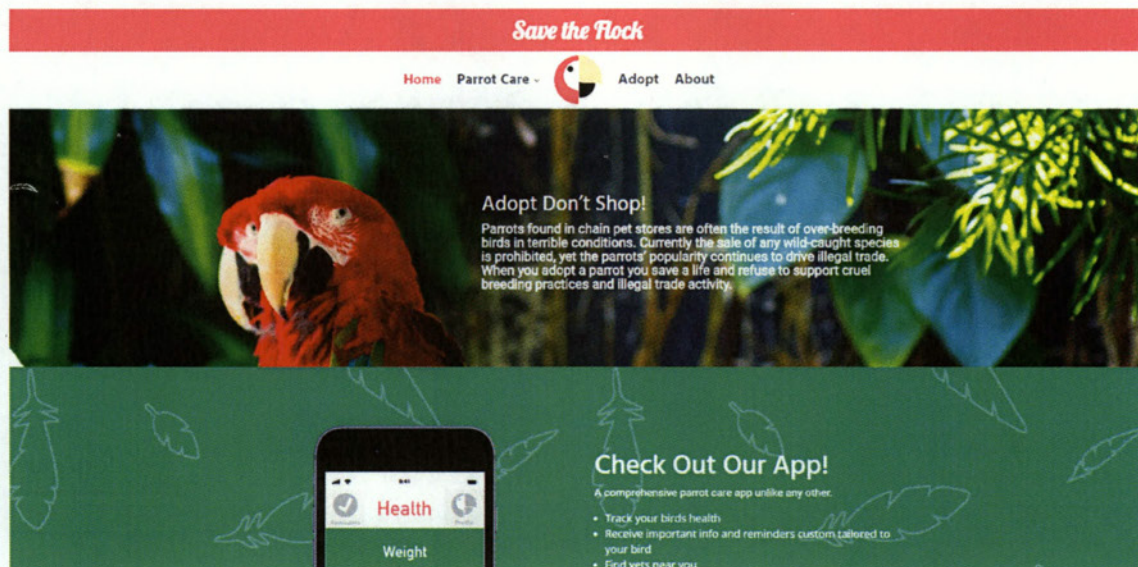
App



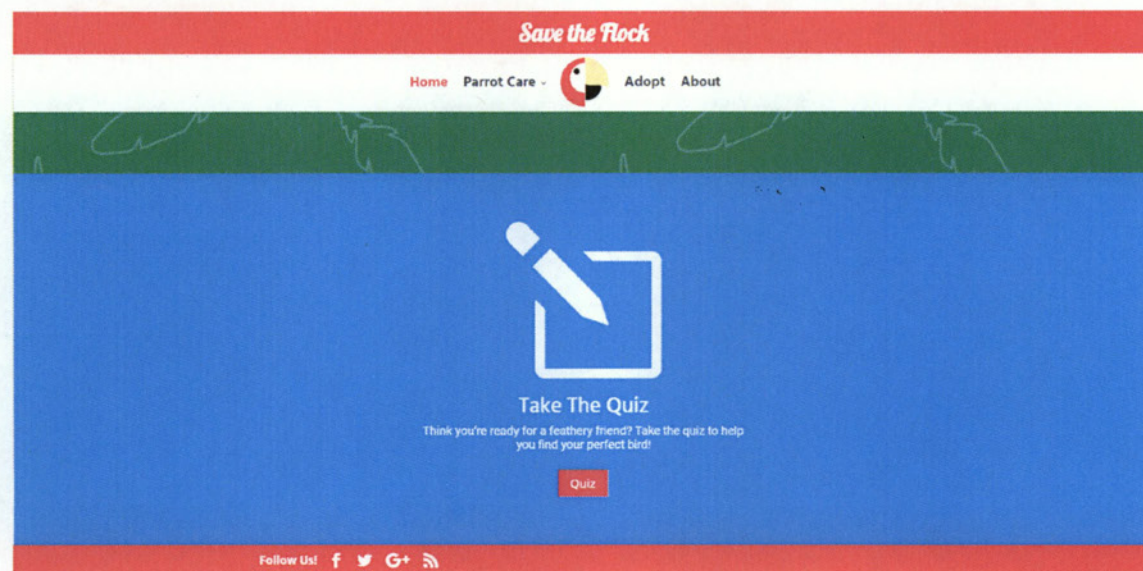
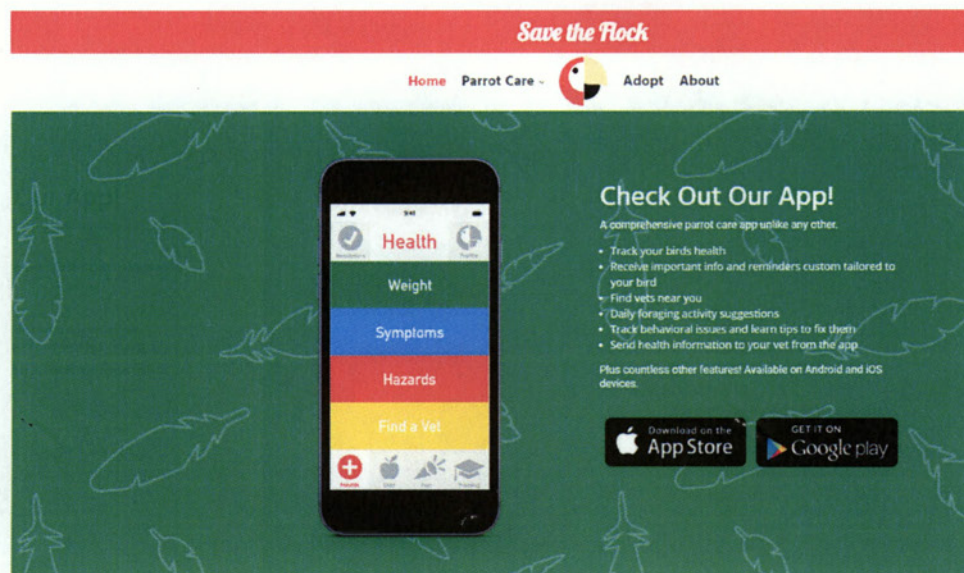
App



Website




Website





Website

Save the Flock

Home
Parrot Care
Adopt
About


Behavior Issues


Dangers


FAQ

Parrot Care Information

Cage

The most agreed upon minimum size (horizontal length) of a cage should be 1 1/2 - 2 times the wingspan of the parrot housed there. This is important because a bird should be able to fully extend its wings (to the cage) and flap them vigorously for exercise. Remember, however, that the more perches, toys, food stations, etc. placed in the cage, the less space is available for adequate wing exercise.

Larger cages and enclosures are better than small ones. The birds that are out of the cage most of the day, 1 1/2 times the parrot's full adult wingspan is the minimum enclosure size. For birds that spend considerable time in their cages, 2 times the parrot's full adult wingspan is recommended. Ideally pet birds should be encouraged to spend time out of their cages, not only for exercise but for social interaction with humans and other birds. However, spending significant amounts of time outside the cage does not justify smaller housing.

For whatever length of time the bird is caged, the animal should be allowed a certain freedom of movement within its enclosure.

It is unfortunate, but most people house their birds in cages that are too small. Some people simply can't afford a large cage or they don't have enough room. Others may rationalize that a small cage is a place of refuge and safety for their bird.

In the wild, parrots feed primarily from foraging activities by flying up or moving to the top of nearby trees. In captivity, birds will also try to stretch up and away when scared. Cereus and parrots will try to get to one's shoulder or hand or fly up on certain rods, ceiling beams, etc. Caged birds will move to the furthest part of the enclosure and/or panic back and forth looking for a way of escape. Small cages do not provide security. Studies have shown that when presented with larger enclosures, even


Save the Flock

Home
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Adopt A Feathery Friend

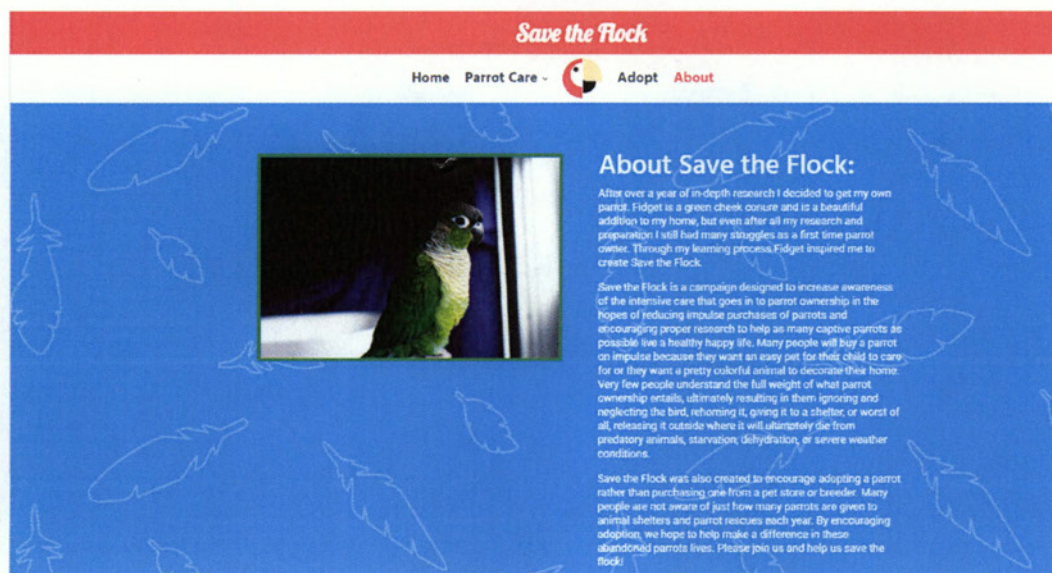
Check out some of the wonderful birds up for adoption around you!

Fill out Adoption Application



Adoption Application

Website



Print Collaterals

So you want to get a parrot...

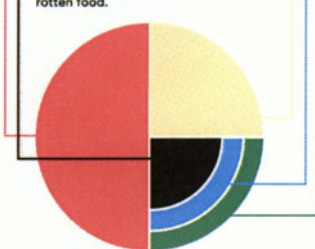
Congratulations! Owning a parrot is a huge step and a big commitment. Here are some of the basics to get you started:

Cage

- Parrots of any kind need as large of a cage as you can give them.
- Minimum cage size is 2 times the length of the extended wing span of your bird in all directions.
- Keep at least 3 toys in your birds cage at all times. Swap these toys out with a different set every week to prevent boredom.
- Use a variety of types of perches including rope, natural wood branches, concrete perches, or swings.
- Clean the cage at least once each week by replacing lining papers, wiping down perches, and scrubbing the bottom cage grate with a cleaning solution of 1 part distilled white vinegar to 3 parts water.

Diet

- 50% Healthy pellet diet
- 25% Fresh veggies (kale, broccoli, peppers, carrots, etc.)
- 10% Fresh fruits (blueberries, grapes, pomegranate, apple, etc.)
- 5% nuts and grains
- 10% sprouted seeds
- Always remove fresh food from the cage at the end of the day to ensure your bird does not eat spoiled or rotten food.



Affection

- Allow your parrot a bare minimum of 2 hours out of the cage daily to fly, stretch its wings, and spend time with you
- Parrots are flock animals and thrive on constant companionship. Consider getting a pair of parrots if you are concerned that just one will get lonely.
- Only pet your bird on the head/neck. If you pet under the wings, on the belly, or down the back your parrot may start to consider you its mate and become aggressive to other people

Warning

A parrot is not the pet for everybody. Sometimes even the smallest mistake may cause your bird to become aggressive and bite. As flock animals, your parrot may call and scream for you if you leave its line of sight. They also love to chew and shred. You may lose clothing, jewelry, phone chargers, or even drywall to your bird's beak. Parrots are exceptional loving creatures that bond with you fiercely, but they require patience and tolerance from their caretakers.

Save the Flock

For more information on parrot care visit www.savetheflock.com and download our app "Parrot Pal"

Budgies

- Lifespan: 10 years
- Noise Level: Low
- Talking Ability: Good (Male)
- Cuddliness: Good
- Fun Fact: 45% of pet birds in the United States are budgies



Cockatiels

- Lifespan: 20 years
- Noise Level: Moderate
- Talking Ability: Good (Male)
- Cuddliness: Great
- Fun Fact: Male cockatiels are excellent fathers! In the wild they will face much larger birds and predators just to keep their family safe.



Conures

- Lifespan: 25 years
- Noise Level: Moderate-Loud
- Talking Ability: Good
- Cuddliness: Great

• Fun Fact: A sun conure's call can reach 104 decibels. This is the same volume level as the average jackhammer



Quakers

- Lifespan: 30 years
- Noise Level: Moderate
- Talking Ability: Good
- Cuddliness: Fair
- Fun Fact: Quakers are the only parrots that build stick nests in branches instead of using a hole in a tree



Parrotlets

- Lifespan: 20 years
- Noise Level: Low
- Talking Ability: Fair
- Cuddliness: Fair
- Fun Fact: Parrotlets are the smallest parrot species commonly bred in captivity



Lovebirds

- Lifespan: 15 years
- Noise Level: Moderate
- Talking Ability: Poor
- Cuddliness: Good
- Fun Fact: Like several other species of parrots, lovebirds show no physical differences between males and females



For more information on parrot care and wild parrots visit our website at savetheflock.com



Download our app!

Parrot Pal
Available on the App Store
and Google Play

Back

Quiz

What is your housing situation?

- ☐ House
- ☒ Apartment
- ☐ My Parent's Basement

Do you have roommates/others living with you? How do they feel about a parrot?

- ☐ I live alone.
- ☐ I live with others and they are okay with a parrot.
- ☒ I live with others and they are unsure about a parrot.
- ☐ I live with others and they are against me getting a parrot.

How much noise can you tolerate?

- ☐ I demand silence.
- ☐ A little peeping is okay.
- ☐ I can handle some screaming.
- ☒ Bring on the earsplitting shrieks of joy!

Do you want your bird to talk?

- ☐ Please no talking that's creepy!
- ☐ It doesn't matter to me.
- ☒ If it could say a few words, that would be cool.
- ☐ I want it to speak very well.

What size of parrot do you prefer?

- ☐ Very Small (3-5 inches tall)
- ☐ Small (6-8 inches tall)
- ☒ Medium (9-11 inches tall)
- ☐ Large (12+ inches tall)

How do you feel about biting?

- ☐ I DO NOT like when animals bite me!
- ☒ I'm fine with some nibbles but I'm scared of bites that break skin!
- ☐ I'm okay with a little risk.
- ☐ I have nerves of steel, bring it on!

How much time (average) per day can you spend with your bird?

- ☐ 10-20 minutes
- ☐ 1-2 hours
- ☒ 3-4 hours
- ☐ 5+ hours

Approximately how much money do you want to spend on the bird?

- ☐ \$10-\$30
- ☐ \$50-\$100
- ☒ \$200-\$500
- ☐ \$600-\$1000
- ☐ \$1,200-\$2,500

How much money do you want to spend per month?

- ☐ \$10
- ☐ \$30
- ☒ \$50
- ☐ \$75+

Parrots live a long time. How long are you able to care for a pet?

- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ 11-20 years
- ☐ 21-35 years
- ☒ 36-50 years
- ☐ 51-80 years

Quiz

Are you a Smoker?

☐ Yes

☒ No

Are you wanting to adopt a bird or buy from a breeder/pet store?

☒ Adopt

☐ Buy

SEE MY SCORE

The following birds would be good for you:

Indian Ringneck

While they can be very sweet and tame, Ringnecks are known to revert back to being untamed if the owner does not regularly pay attention and make an effort to keep the bird tame and loving. Ringnecks are also known to bite fairly often if they are ignored too often. These birds are excellent talkers and have a pleasant whistle, but are also quite vocal and will talk and whistle all day long.

Lorikeet

Lorikeets, also affectionately called lorries, are very intense birds. They are not shy and often have a bubbly enthusiastic personality. Lorikeets relish playtime and can sometimes become destructive so they need a very watchful owner. These birds can also be very noisy with a repetitive high-pitched "back". They are exceptional talkers and can learn words and phrases with ease.

Note: The quiz can be found online at <http://mackenzieshae.com/bird-quiz/>
 The quiz and code can also be found in the attached flash drive along with a video screengrab of the website.

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